

ation of the developmental disabilities programs that have meant so much to Americans with disabilities.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
August 6, 1996.

NOTE: S. 1757, approved August 6, was assigned Public Law No. 104-183.

Remarks Honoring the 1996 United States Olympic Team *August 7, 1996*

Thank you very much. I want to welcome Dr. Walker here and Dick Schultz and Maynard Jackson and others who come from the Olympic committee and from Atlanta. I want to say also a special word of thanks to the Vice President, who worked so hard on America's contribution to the Olympic games, who can't be here today, and to my good friend Mack McLarty for all the work they did to help the Olympics succeed.

And I want to welcome the coaches and the family members who are here. But most of all, I want to welcome you here. I want you to know you've caused us two problems. One is, none of us got any sleep for the last 2 weeks, and I don't think we hurt the public interest—[*laughter*]*—*but we enjoyed watching you, sometimes until 1 o'clock in the morning. The second thing you have done is good in a way; we've all intensified our training schedule around here—[*laughter*]*—*since we watched the Olympics. But I asked my staff if there were any special requests that I should make of you, and an enormous number of people asked if we could get the women's soccer team to teach us that belly slide. [*Laughter*]

As all of you know, this was a very great thing for the United States. When Hillary and I had a chance to come and meet with you at the beginning before the Olympics began, I said that we would cheer when you won and cry when you lost, but that your efforts and what you symbolized for America would be the most important thing. And I really very much believe that today.

This was a remarkable Olympic experience. And I think in many ways it was fitting that the centennial Olympics were held in the United States because we do represent so many nations. When I leave you, I'm going out to California. There were 197 teams in the Olympics. In one county in California, there are people from the

same places as over 150 of those teams. That's what's special about our country. And you gave that to the world when we saw you, when we saw you compete, when we saw you win. And we're very grateful to you. I'm also very grateful to the people in Atlanta who did a magnificent job in organizing the games and for the community spirit there after the bombing. I thought it was magnificent.

There may have been some discussion about this, but I believe that since more people saw these games than any games in history, both in person and on television, because they were so well organized, because there were so many countries represented, because you were so magnificent, and because of the way people reacted to the tragedy, as far as I'm concerned, these Atlanta games were the best. They were the greatest games in the history of the Olympics.

I also would like to say a special word of appreciation to all the athletes who competed and all those who won. But let me say, when I looked at our team, I couldn't help—as the father of a daughter of whom I'm very proud, I couldn't help but note that over 20 years ago, in a complete bipartisan commitment here in Washington, the United States Congress passed something called title IX which made it possible for a lot of the women athletes to be here today. There were 77,000 spectators at the women's soccer finals. There were a lot of men basketball players watching the women's basketball finals thanking God they weren't on the court that day. [*Laughter*]

We should be on the forefront always of bringing more people into the world of sport, more people into competition, more people having a chance to live out their dreams whatever they are. And yesterday we saw off the torch for the Paralympics which will be starting in

Atlanta soon. And I know every one of you support that. One of our runners in the Paralympics actually is on an NCAA Division I track team at my alma mater Georgetown University. So we ought to be for more and more and more people having a chance to participate.

And let me finally say that I had very high hopes for all of you and for our country. They were exceeded not only by the medals you won but by the way you won them. And you gave something very special to the American people. I'm glad you can be here today. And we'd like

to just have a chance to give a small portion back to you through your tour of your house that you gave to all of us for those wonderful 17 days.

Thank you all. God bless you, and good luck.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:28 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to LeRoy T. Walker, president, and Richard D. Schultz, executive director, United States Olympic Committee; and Maynard Jackson, former mayor of Atlanta, GA.

Remarks on the Possible Discovery of Life on Mars and an Exchange With Reporters

August 7, 1996

The President. Good afternoon. I'm glad to be joined by my science and technology adviser, Dr. Jack Gibbons, to make a few comments about today's announcement by NASA.

This is the product of years of exploration and months of intensive study by some of the world's most distinguished scientists. Like all discoveries, this one will and should continue to be reviewed, examined, and scrutinized. It must be confirmed by other scientists. But clearly, the fact that something of this magnitude is being explored is another vindication of America's space program and our continuing support for it, even in these tough financial times. I am determined that the American space program will put its full intellectual power and technological prowess behind the search for further evidence of life on Mars.

First, I have asked Administrator Goldin to ensure that this finding is subject to a methodical process of further peer review and validation. Second, I have asked the Vice President to convene at the White House before the end of the year a bipartisan space summit on the future of America's space program. A significant purpose of this summit will be to discuss how America should pursue answers to the scientific questions raised by this finding. Third, we are committed to the aggressive plan we have put in place for robotic exploration of Mars. America's next unmanned mission to Mars is scheduled to lift off from the Kennedy Space Center in November. It will be followed by a second

mission in December. I should tell you that the first mission is scheduled to land on Mars on July 4th, 1997, Independence Day.

It is well worth contemplating how we reached this moment of discovery. More than 4 billion years ago, this piece of rock was formed as a part of the original crust of Mars. After billions of years it broke from the surface and began a 16-million-year journey through space that would end here on Earth. It arrived in a meteor shower 13,000 years ago. And in 1984 an American scientist on an annual U.S. Government mission to search for meteors on Antarctica picked it up and took it to be studied. Appropriately, it was the first rock to be picked up that year, rock number 84001.

Today, rock 84001 speaks to us across all those billions of years and millions of miles. It speaks of the possibility of life. If this discovery is confirmed, it will surely be one of the most stunning insights into our universe that science has ever uncovered. Its implications are as far reaching and awe inspiring as can be imagined. Even as it promises answers to some of our oldest questions, it poses still others even more fundamental. We will continue to listen closely to what it has to say as we continue the search for answers and for knowledge that is as old as humanity itself but essential to our people's future.

Thank you.